



High Sierra Leadership Backpacking Experience

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Major: Chemistry

What did you learn?

Through this experience, I learned what kind of leader I am. I approach leadership in a less assertive way, which can be seen as different and sometimes in a negative way. My leadership style can be described as leading by example. I act the way I want others in the group to perform such as always trying to help others out. My leadership style relies on having a relationship of respect between the leader and the group; it is important to understand your followers. Some of the weaknesses of my leadership were being decisive, not being assertive, and being prepared. As a follower, I am always willing to help. I learned to be apart of a team and encourage each other. I learned there are many ways to approach leadership.



The Golden Staircase

How did your experience impact you personally?

Personally, my view of the world transformed. I gained a large appreciation for just life in general and all the things I have in the front country. Being in the backcountry showed me how much I take for granite on everyday basis. I learned to live simply and take care of myself in a harsh environment. My appreciation for people and the world around me grew and I learned to live more in the moment. I learned that everything I did was vital for survival.

Experience description:

For my STEP project, I spent 24 days backpacking in California through approximately 170 miles with a purpose to improve my leadership, teamwork, and problem solving skills. Each day on the trail, one or two people were chosen to be Leader of the Day. As Leader of the Day, someone would make decisions for the group such as when to take breaks, where to camp, and assign different roles to other people in the group, etc. Throughout the trip, we had lessons planned about general wildness ideas and leadership theories. Each day, we would reflect over the positives and negatives of the day and what each leader could do well or improve.

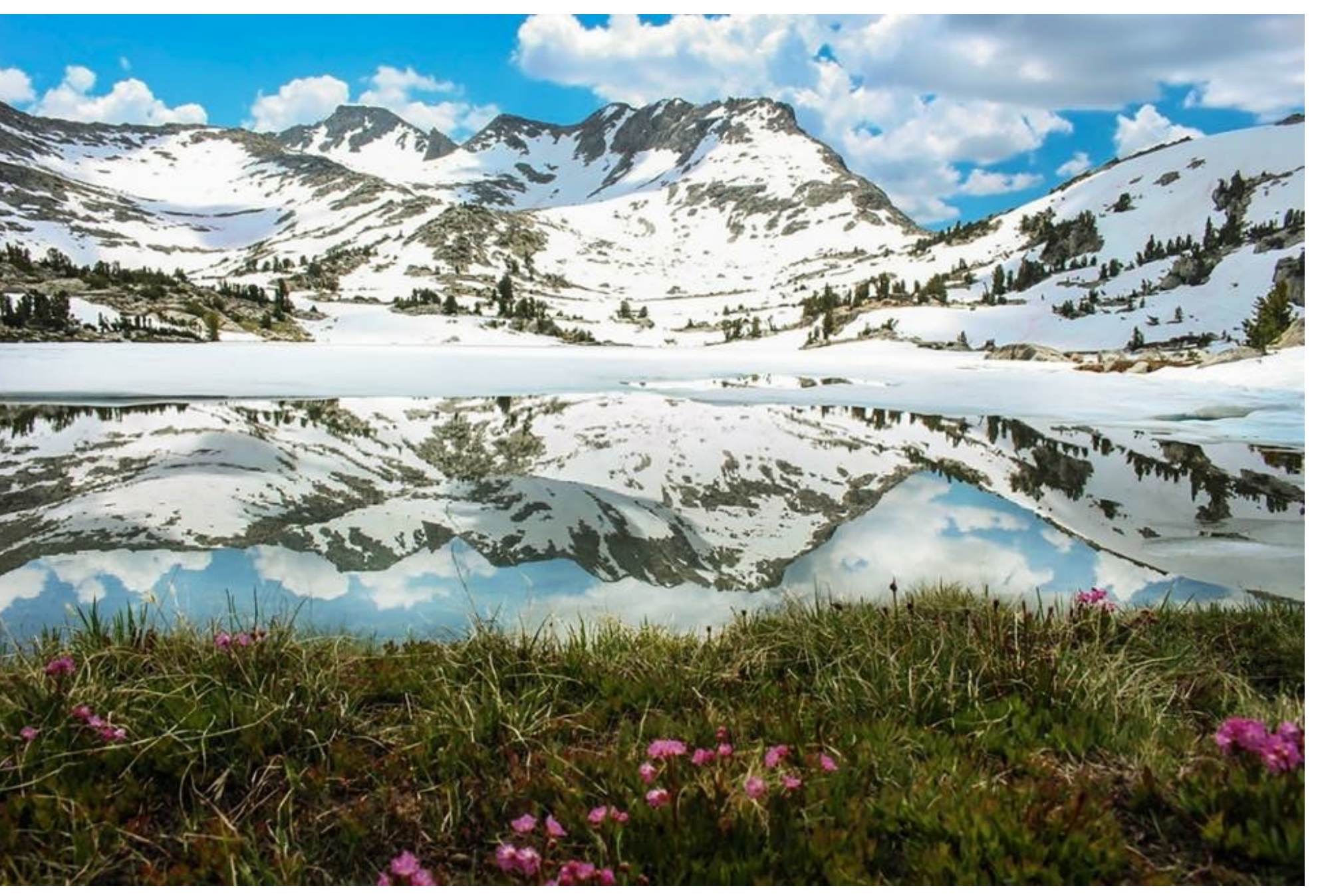
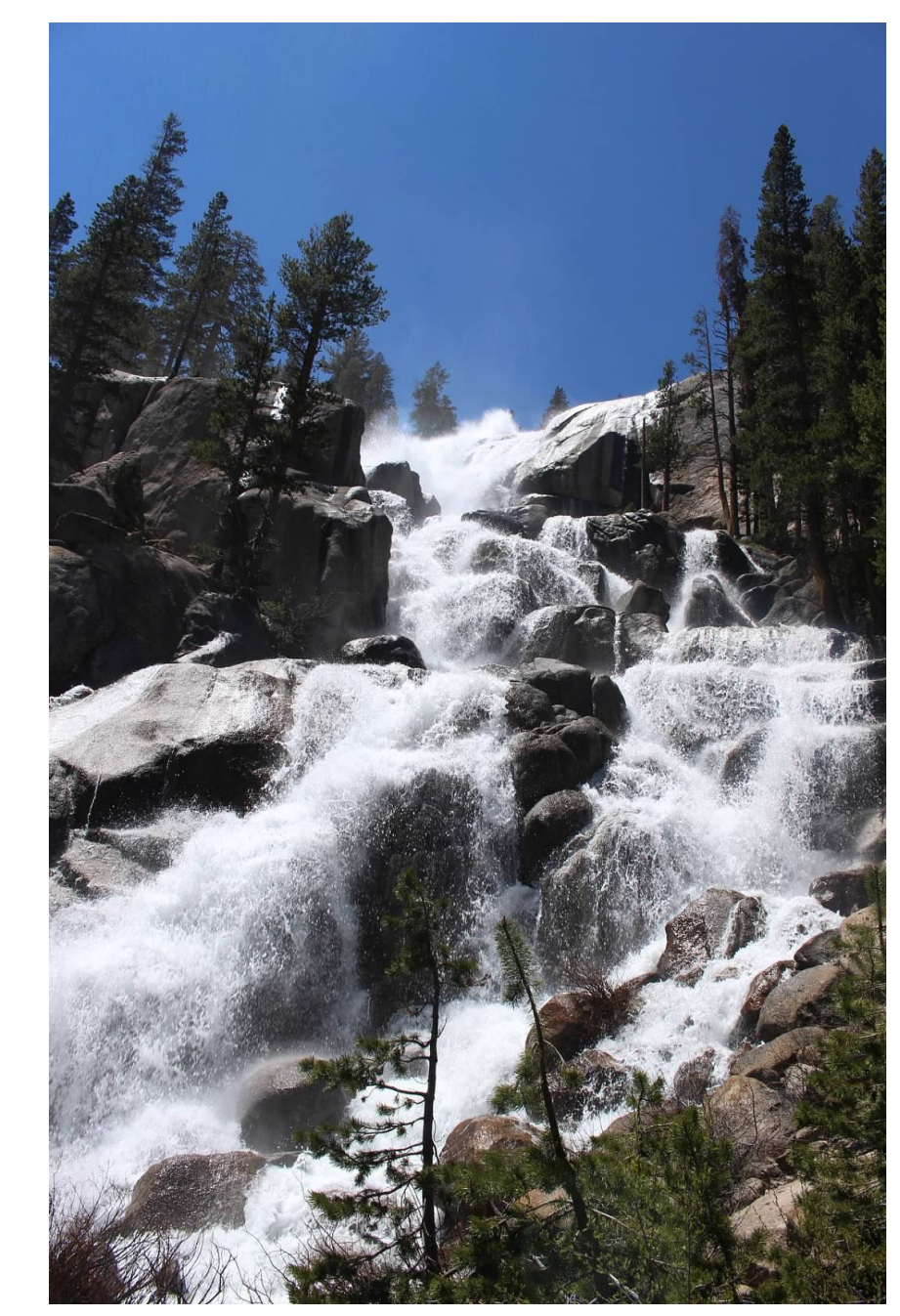


Figure 1. Mountains reflecting off water
Figure 2. On top of Mount Whitney

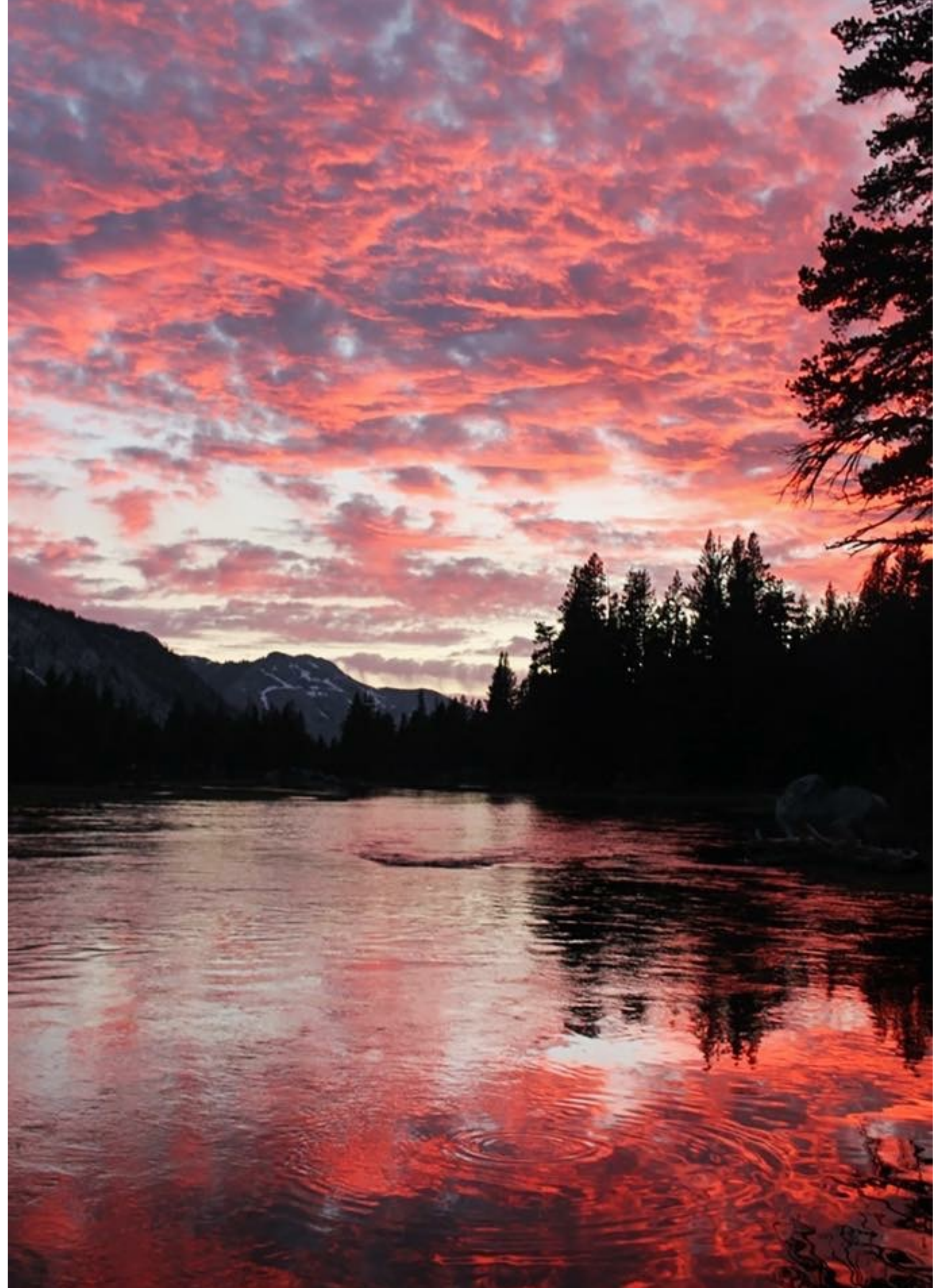
Views from the trail



How did your experience impact your academic, personal, and life goals moving forward?

My backpacking leadership expedition has been very valuable for my life in many ways personally and professionally. One of the skills that will be useful in life is the hard work mentality that goes along with backpacking. From backpacking, I learned that a person is only as strong as their mind and that how people view situations makes a huge difference on how they will perform. I can transfer that into my everyday life and try to keep a positive attitude on situations to make the best out of them. Another skill that transferred into my everyday life is the idea of taking care of myself and gaining organization skills. For three weeks, I lived out of a backpack and carried everything I had on my back. Finally, learning about my leadership style will greatly benefit me in my future goals. I want to become a dentist and own or be a part of a small practice. As a dentist, I will be a leader to assistants and other workers. While leading hot group on the trip, I was able to learn my strength and weaknesses as a leader. In my future goals, I will be able to improve my leadership style while using my strengths to my advantage. I will also be able to apply different types of leadership to my own style to create the best vision as possible. I also learned how to be a contributing and effective team member.

Sunset at McClure Meadow



Favorite Part of Experience:

My favorite part of my experience was getting to know of the great people on my trip. Everyone brought something to the group. When placed in an environment where you rely on each other, trust has to be gained fast. With countless hours on the trail, we all got to know each other and learn from one another. Also, I enjoyed all the beautiful scenery I experienced on the trip. Many of the wonderful sights I saw are things most people do not get to experience in their lifetime. The colors and beauty of the mountains and nature is not something I can experience everyday in Ohio.